

WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD NORTH COAST REGION

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE BOARD

October 2000

OFFICE REORGANIZATION

The state budget growth of the Regional Water Board staff work has resulted in the need to restructure the organization from three Divisions into four Divisions. The new structure is:

TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION [Frank Reichmuth, Supervising Water Resources Control Engineer]: This division will continue to focus on water quality protection related to timber harvesting and management, and will be organized into four geographic watershed units.

REGIONAL WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION [Ranjit Gill, Environmental Program Manager I]: This new division was spun off from the Watershed Protection Division. The new Division will include three programmatic units: watershed assessment and monitoring, basin planning and related activities, and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development. New resources were received this fiscal year in the watershed assessment and TMDL areas.

WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION [Bob Tancreto, Supervising Water Resources Control Engineer]: This Division will now concentrate on core regulatory programs--such as Waste Discharge Requirements, NPDES permits, and storm water pollution regulation--throughout three watershed units. Some new resources were received in storm water pollution regulation, while there was a reduction in general NPDES permit and waste discharge requirements.

CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION [Susan Warner, Supervising Water Resources Control Engineer]: This division will continue to focus on pollution investigation, cleanup, and abatement from discharges of hazardous materials, such as solvents and petroleum. Three geographic watershed units support this division, plus the Administrative unit.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

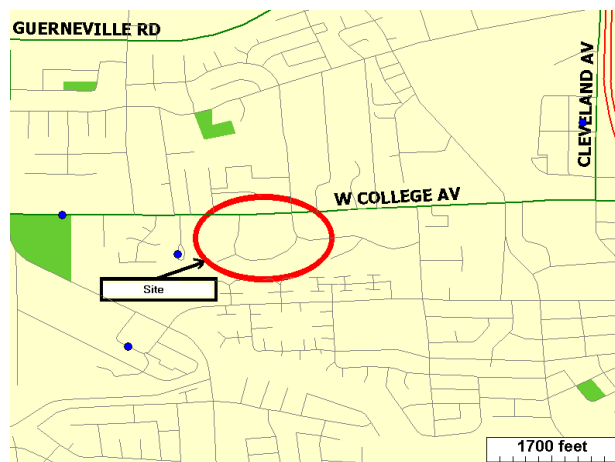
CLEANUPS AND SPECIAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION

West College Avenue at Clover Drive, Santa Rosa, Groundwater Contamination

[Staff contact: Susan Warner]

In the September Report Board, members were informed that new findings of perchloroethylene (PCE) in groundwater has affected wells near the intersection of West College Avenue and Clover Drive in an unannexed area outside of Santa Rosa's city boundaries. Continued sampling has confirmed additional drinking water wells are contaminated.

Staff has requested the assistance of the State Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Investigations Branch (DHS-EHIB), for health



(Map shows intersection of West College Avenue and Clover Drive, Santa Rosa.)

assessment activities and responding to public health inquiries. DHS-EHIB, has informed Regional Board staff that the levels of PCE found could cause an acute toxic exposure for children. Staff and the Sonoma County Health Department are informing residents through telephone calls, flyers and fact sheets that

alternative water supplies should be used. Alternatives to protect public health are being explored as quickly as possible by all involved public agencies. Staff is scheduling an informational meeting with residents on November 2, 2000.

Former Remco Hydraulics Facility, Willits (staff contact: Luis Rivera)

Consultants to the Willits Environmental Remediation Trust (Trust) have completed the injection portion of the pilot studies authorized by waste discharge requirements issued by the Regional Water Board in July. The public and press were allowed to observe the pilot study on Monday, September 25th, the first day of injection of calcium polysulfide and molasses to groundwater. A comprehensive program of air monitoring was implemented by the Trust in compliance with waste discharge requirements. Hand-held air monitoring will continue for seven weeks, and the fixed air monitoring system will continue to operate 24 hours per day for six months.

Background concentrations collected prior to the start of the pilot study recorded hydrogen sulfide at a range of 0.002 to 0.006 part per million (ppm). Levels of hydrogen sulfide were low and well under the limits of 1.0 ppm within the building, and 0.030 ppm outside the building as required in Regional Water Quality Board Order R1-2000-54. Immediate investigation of

hydrogen sulfide odor complaints by the Little Lake Fire Department and the consultant to the Trust occurred. Odor complaints could not be verified. Staff went door-to-door to answer questions and learn about concerns associated with the pilot study.

In a matter unrelated to the pilot test, the Press Democrat reported on Thursday, October 5, that Erin Brockovich and her lawyer partner, Ed Masry, confirmed Wednesday that they have agreed to represent a group of Willits residents in civil litigation surrounding the contaminated Remco Hydraulics plant site.

WATERSHED MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Klamath River TMDL

(staff contact: Dave Evans)

Following the Arcata Board meeting on September 22, 2000, staff met with a group of agency representatives and PacifiCorp personnel and consultants. The meeting included a tour of all of the Klamath River hydroelectric projects (Figure 1) that are operated by PacifiCorp. The purpose of the tour was to become acquainted with counterparts in other organizations and key features of the river water quality problems.

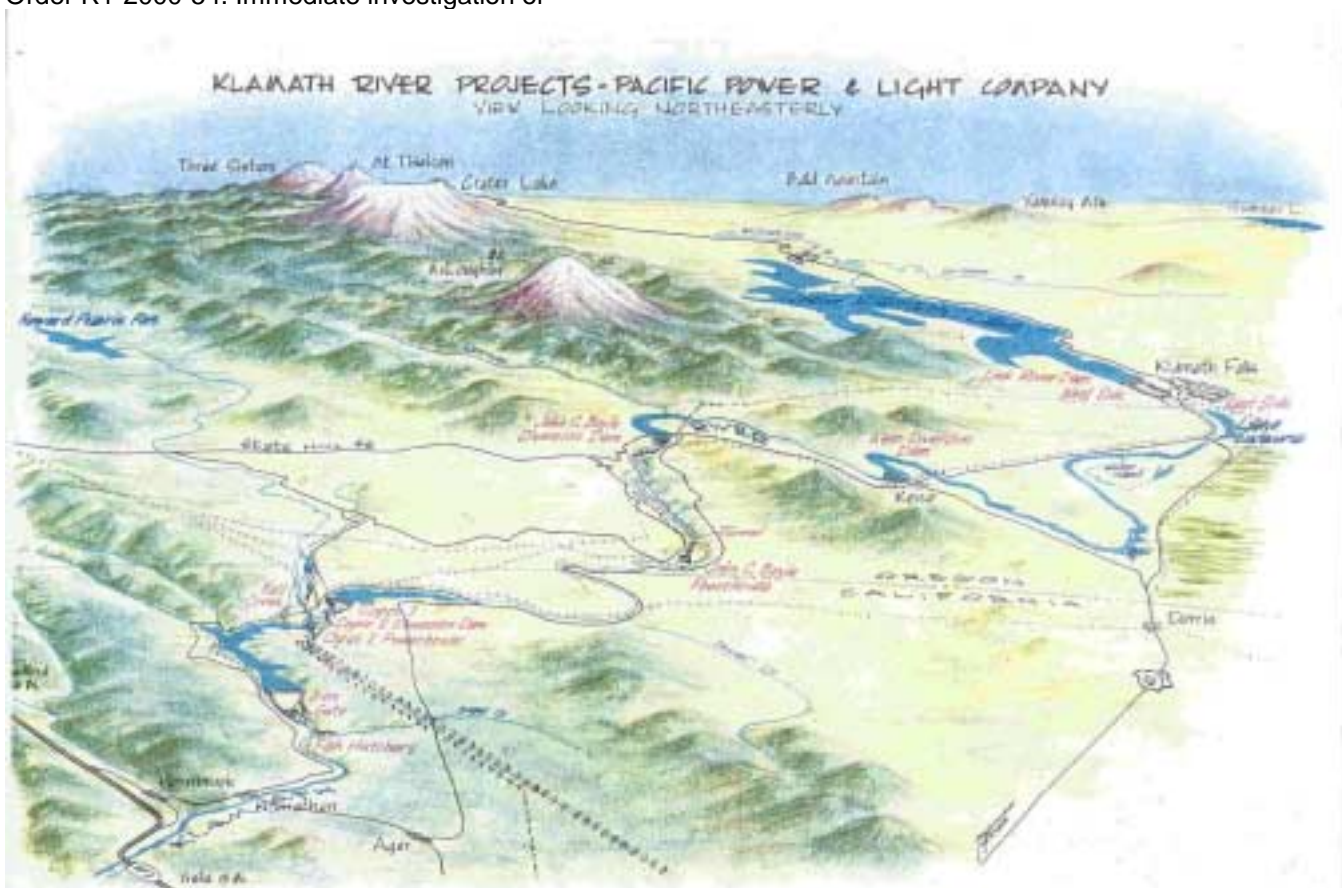


Figure 1

A meeting was held on the following day, and included David Leland, Tom Dunbar, and Dave Evans of the Regional Water Board staff, three representatives from the State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Russ Kanz from the State Board Water Rights Division. The purpose was to begin coordination of both TMDL work and issuance of a 401 Certification as part of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) process to re-license the PacifiCorp hydroelectric projects.

All agreed to exchange Basin Plans and to participate in regular meetings to continue coordinated work between the states.

Future meetings are scheduled with the Klamath group and for CA/OR coordination of TMDLs and 401 certification.

Garcia River Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)
(staff contact: Dave Evans)

On September 6, 2000, the State Water Resources Control Board conducted a public workshop on the proposed amendment to the Water Quality Control Plan for the North Coast Region (Basin Plan) entitled "Summary of Garcia River Watershed Quality Attainment Strategy."

On September 21, 2000, the State Board unanimously approved The Basin Plan amendment. The Office of Administrative Law must now review and approve the Basin Plan amendment before it becomes effective.

WATERSHED PROTECTION DIVISION

Sea Ranch North Plant Repair Project
(Staff Contact: Bob Tancreto)

The Executive Officer authorized a discharge to the percolation pond on the Sea Ranch Golf Links in accordance with waste discharge requirements Order No. 94-4 of up to two million gallons of treated and disinfected wastewater from the County Service Area (CSA) No. 6 North Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Facilities. The discharge is required to allow the repair of a submerged suction hose preventing the Gualala Community Services District from accepting water transfers from the CSA No. 6 North Treatment and Disposal Facilities. The discharge was authorized on October 6, 2000.

TIMBER HARVEST DIVISION

Pacific Lumber Company
(staff contact: Frank Reichmuth)

On September 11, 2000, the staff of the timber harvest division issued a staff report and tentative orders

relating to Pacific Lumber Company (PALCO) for the Board to consider. The public hearing will occur in February 2001, when the Board will consider regulatory action alternatives related to PALCO timber harvest activities in Freshwater Creek, Elk River, Stitz Creek, Bear Creek and Jordan Creek watersheds.

At the September 22, 2000, Board meeting, the Regional Board indicated its desire for the signatory agencies to the "Implementation Agreement with regard to the Pacific Lumber Company Habitat Conservation Plan" appear before the Board to clarify the intent of the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and related documents in protecting water quality. The signatory agencies include the National Marine Fishery Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and California Department of Forestry. In addition to the state and federal agencies, PALCO is a signatory to the HCP. Staff is contacting the signatory agencies with respect to the Regional Board request.

Information on the Regional Water Board proceedings in this matter can be found at our Internet web site:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/palco.html>

SEPTEMBER BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

On September 21, 2000, the North Coast Regional Board toured the Louisiana Pacific Samoa Pulp Mill, Inc. (L-P). L-P owns and operates a market bleached kraft pulp mill located on the Samoa Peninsula in Humboldt County, California.



Board members from left are Bev Wasson, Chairman William Hoy, William Massey, Leslie Dahlhoff, James Mitchell, and State Board Acting Executive Director Ed Anton

Chairman Hoy requested the Board tour the facility when representatives of L-P appeared before the Board at its August meeting and requested renewal of waste discharge requirements.

ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINTS

On September 8, 2000, the Executive Officer issued a \$21,000 Administrative Civil Liability (ACL) Complaint to the **City of Santa Rosa**. The penalty, issued pursuant to SB 709, is a result of violations (January-June 2000) of effluent limits for the City's Laguna Subregional Wastewater Treatment, Reuse and Disposal Facility. Unless waived, a hearing on this matter will be held at the October 27, 2000, Regional Board meeting in Santa Rosa.

In last month's report, there was an article regarding the \$50,000 ACL Complaint issued to **Kernit and Susan Rankin**. The Complaint proposed forgiveness of \$25,000 contingent on submittal of a complete erosion control plan by September 22, 2000, and implementation of adequate erosion control work before October 15, 2000. An erosion control plan was submitted and construction implement measures began. On October 6, 2000, the Rankins waived the right to a hearing on October 27, and submitted a payment of \$25,000.

In August, the Board considered **Acme Auto Wrecker's** request to forgive the remaining \$20,000 due for the ACL Complaint 97-33 issued in 1997, and consider a supplemental environmental project. The Regional Water Board took no action on Acme's request, and the remaining \$20,000 was due on September 15, 2000. Acme submitted a partial payment of \$5,000 on September 11, and indicated a "goal" of submitting the remaining \$15,000 by the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2001. Staff is working with the State Water Board's Office of Chief Counsel to convert the remaining overdue ACL amount to a civil judgment and proceed to collection.

CLEANUP AND ABATEMENT ORDERS

No Cleanup and Abatement Orders were issued over the last 30 days.

13267 LETTER ORDERS

During the month of September, there were eleven 13267 letter Orders issued by the Executive Officer. One of these Orders was issued to the **California Department of General Services** directing the Department to submit a report of investigation for petroleum releases from a leaking underground storage tank located at the **California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection** facility on 2210 West

College Avenue. Staff has experienced significant delays with the Department of General Services in preparing and submitting needed reports at the site.

401 CERTIFICATIONS

During the month of September, there were twenty 401 Certification letters issued. Information regarding proposed certifications are available at our Internet web site at:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwgcb1/notice404.html>

SPIILLS, COMPLAINTS AND INSPECTIONS

On September 21, 2000, a manhole began to overflow from a collection area for the City of Arcata Waste Water Treatment Facilities. Over the course of one hour, between 600 and 2,400 gallons of untreated sewage was released. The sewage flowed to Campbell Creek to Gannon Slough, and then into Humboldt Bay. The overflow was caused by a sand and gravel blockage of the line. The City of Arcata removed the blockage, and service was restored. The Department of Health Services indicated in a letter dated September 25, 2000, that no shellfish harvested after 1:00 p.m. on September 21 could be sold due to potential contamination. Shellfish harvesting resumed on September 25, 2000, after samples collected at the growing beds indicated acceptable levels of fecal coliform bacteria. The incident is under investigation by Board staff.

In addition to this spill, there were reports of two other spills. Those spills are detailed in the October agenda.

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

AVAILABLE WEB SITE INFORMATION

PDF files available for viewing and downloading: Information posted on the website includes public notices, including complaints for administrative civil liabilities, 401 certifications, proposed contaminated site cleanup decisions, proposed issuance of NPDES permits and general waste discharge requirements and workshops. In addition, board meeting agendas, adopted orders, program information (which includes information on 20 programs carried out by staff), vacancy notices, maps describing the regions boundaries, organizational charts, contact information including a list of telephone numbers for contacting staff, press releases, etc., are also available. The

downloadable documents page includes items such as the Basin Plan, Watershed Management Initiative, and the Active Toxic Sites List.

The address of the web site is:

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/>



WORKSHOPS

Erosion Prevention and Sediment Control Workshops.

The North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board staff and the Engineering Contractors Association sponsored one-day workshops throughout the North Coast Region during the first two weeks in September focusing on erosion prevention and sediment control education.

The workshops were held September 6 in Santa Rosa, September 12 in Ukiah, and September 13 in Eureka. A free workshop was also held on September 20 in Weaverville. The Trinity County Resource Conservation District and the Trinity County Planning and Building Departments sponsored this workshop.

On Thursday, October 5, Regional Board staff presented an abbreviated erosion and sediment control workshop to Sonoma County staff.

The workshops described the provisions of regulations that apply to construction sites and proper planning and implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), how to prepare a storm water pollution prevention plan, and how to read and use blueprints to develop an effective pollution prevention plan.

The sponsors offered Certificates of Completion for attendees, verifying the training according to requirements of their National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) storm water permit.

SPEECHES/PANELS

The North Coast Russian River unit of the Timber Harvest Division assisted in hosting a Cumulative Watershed Effects (CWE) conference on September 7th and 8th. Staff in attendance was Christine Wright-Shacklett, Holly Lundborg, Cheri Blatt, and Dave Fowler. Dave Evans was on the TMDL panel at the conference along with Alydda Manglesdorf and David Leland.

The conference was sponsored by the North Coast Regional Water Board; the Center for Forestry and Wildland Resource Center; University of California, Berkeley; United States Forest Service; Watershed Management Council; USA EPA; California Department of Forestry; and the California Department of Fish and Game. Approximately 200 people attended, including 15 staff from the Regional Water Board Timber Harvest and Watershed Divisions. Presentations were given by the California Department of Forestry (CDF), University of California, US Forest Service, California Department of Fish and Game, National Marine Fisheries Service, US EPA, Regional Water Board, the Resources Agency, water districts plus researchers, private foresters, and consultants. Presentations included historical perspectives, relevancy of CWE assessment, the scientific basis for identification of CWE, the USFS approach to CWE, integration of CWE assessments across ownerships, data monitoring, modeling, watershed analysis within a Sustained Yield Plan, identification of key areas of agreement and areas needing further resolution. Presentations were given on Freshwater Creek (Humboldt County), the Mokelumne Basin, TMDLs and application of CWE concepts. A Decision-Making and Uncertainty presentation was made by Andrea Tuttle of CDF and a Policy and Legal Issues for Addressing Multiple Laws was presented by Maria Rea of the Resources Agency.

PUBLIC FILE REVIEW

From September 1 through October 1, there was one written request for review of the Regional Water Board's records. These files were made available pursuant to the California Public Records Act. In addition, there were a total of 27 people who came into the offices and requested file review.

PROMOTIONS/STAFF HIRING

With the office restructuring, transfers and promotions have occurred. Dr. Ranjit Gill was promoted to serve as the Chief of the new Regional Watershed Division.

David Leland was promoted to Senior Water Resource Control Engineer overseeing the new TMDL Unit within Dr. Gill's Division.

Diana Henriouille-Henry was promoted to Senior Water Resource Control Engineer overseeing the Headwaters Unit within the Timber Harvest Division.

William Winchester was promoted to Environmental Specialist IV overseeing the North Coast/Upper Russian River unit within the Watershed Protection Division.

In addition, there are two new front office support staff members. Donna Colvin, Office Assistant, started on September 25, 2000, and Janet Mahoney, Office Assistant, started on September 27, 2000

E. Jean Lockett has been promoted to Secretary to the Board members and the Executive Officer.

With fiscal year 2000-01 budget funds now available, additional technical staff hires are anticipated.

CUSTOMER SURVEYS

Customer Service Survey forms for all California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) Boards, Departments, and Offices are routinely provided to the public, and are also available to the public at our front counter. Upon completion of these forms, the public submits the forms directly to CalEPA, who then reviews the forms before forwarding them to the appropriate Board, Department or Office involved with the specific survey form. The North Coast Regional Water Board received one form during the month of September reflecting staff 's exemplary work.